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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS; HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS; COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE VIENNA DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION; REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Letter dated 12 June 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that on 26 and 27 March 1997, the Human Rights Committee considered the initial report of Georgia prepared in accordance with article 40, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The report reflected the existing situation with respect to human rights in Georgia and covered the period from January 1994 to August 1995.

On 10 April 1997, the Human Rights Committee adopted concluding comments relating to Georgia (CCPR/C/79/Add.74) and provided suggestions and recommendations with a view to promoting the improvement of the human rights situation in the country.

Based on the recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Committee and being committed to respect for and strict observance of the fundamental principles of human rights, on 3 June 1997, the President of Georgia, Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, issued a Decree on Measures to Strengthen the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia.

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* A/52/50.

Under the Decree:

1. The Parliament of Georgia is called on to speed up approval of the candidature to the position of Public Defender;

2. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of State Security and the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia,

(a) Shall establish strict control over the detection and prevention of incidents of torture and ill-treatment in places of pre-trial detention and shall bring to justice persons who are found guilty of such illegal actions;

(b) Shall work out and undertake additional measures in places of pre-trail detention, penitentiaries and police stations to prevent violations of human rights, and shall adhere strictly to the duration of pre-trial detention provided for by the Constitution of Georgia;

(c) Once every three months the respective Ministries shall submit reports on measures taken aimed at improving the protection of human rights.

The telephone numbers and addresses of those responsible shall be provided to the population through the mass media to be used by citizens in critical situations; on receiving the signal, those responsible must arrive at the place of the incident accompanied by an expert doctor, a lawyer and the persons involved. According to the legislation, the mass media and representatives of the Department on the Protection of Human Rights of the National Security Council are also to participate;

A commemorative booklet of international standards for the protection of human rights shall be issued and circulated among the staff of law enforcement bodies. The booklet is to explain the responsibility under the law in cases of any kind of violation of human rights during pre-trial detention, imprisonment or interrogation;

3. Within a period of one month the Ministry of Internal Affairs shall present proposals for the improvement of medical services and sanitary conditions in places of pre-trial detention and penitentiaries;

4. Within a period of two months the Ministry of Justice shall work out measures for the effective functioning of the bail system;

5. Within a period of two months the Ministry of Education:

(a) Shall present a report on measures aimed at improving the social conditions of homeless children and a plan for future action in this regard;

(b) Shall study awareness of human rights issues in secondary and special secondary schools, and shall introduce necessary changes into the programmes of institutions of higher education with a view to acquainting students with human rights and to promoting respect for them;

6. The Ministry of Health:

(a) Shall develop a national programme on reproduction and family planning to improve woman's health conditions and to reduce the number of abortions;

(b) Shall resolve the question of providing specialized medical institutions and pharmacies with contraceptives and shall undertake their popularization through the mass media.

7. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security shall ensure the serious study of human rights issues by law enforcement students in the framework of courses on constitutional and international law;

8. The Social Management and Information Centre within the State Chancellery shall issue a collection of international instruments on human rights (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention Against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and provide for their dissemination among the population and the governmental bodies of Georgia;

9. The Supreme Court of Georgia shall provide for the effective implementation by the courts of international legal standards in human rights, in accordance with articles 6, paragraph 2, and 7 of the Constitution of Georgia;

10. The considerations and recommendations of the Human Rights Committee of 9 April 1997 shall be annexed to the Decree;

11. A joint inter-agency commission shall be established to facilitate work on urgent organizational matters;

12. The Decree is to be studied by the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of State Security and the Office of Prosecutor-General of Georgia;

13. The Deputy Secretary for Human Rights Issues of the National Security Council, Mrs. Rusudan Beridze, shall be responsible for coordination and control over the implementation of the present Decree.

We believe that the Presidential Decree responds fully to the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee and its timely implementation will be a major step forward in the establishment of internationally accepted standards and principles in our country.

I request your kind assistance in having the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 114 (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative